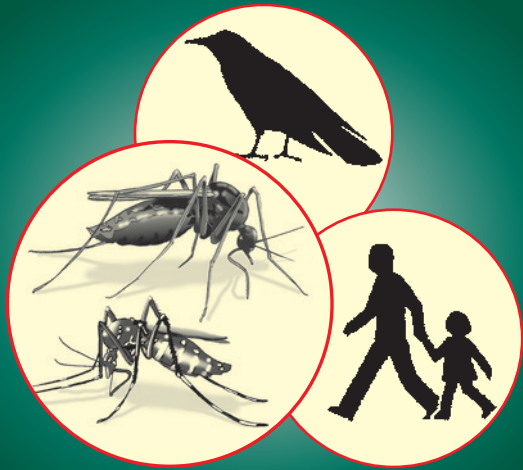


West Nile VIRUS:



What People in Montgomery County Need to Know

What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus is a disease transmitted from infected birds to people by mosquitoes. Although most people who are infected suffer no ill effects or only mild flu-like symptoms, a small number of infected people develop encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of brain or brain lining) and die or have severe and lasting complications.

West Nile Virus was first identified in Uganda in 1937. It is now found throughout Africa and the Middle East, in parts of Europe, Russia, India, Indonesia and Australia. It first appeared in the United States in New York City in 1999. From there it spread rapidly across the country.

To date there is no cure for West Nile Virus.



Mosquitoes in Montgomery County

There are many different species of mosquitoes in the world but only a few live in Montgomery County. The two most common are *Culex*, a common northern mosquito, and *Aedes albopictus*, the Asian Tiger.

Culex are native mosquitoes that are most active from dusk to dawn when people are less likely to be outdoors. They are gray-brown colored, lay eggs in both large and small bodies of stagnant water and can fly about a mile or two.

The Asian Tiger is a non-native mosquito that is spreading throughout Montgomery County. It is smaller than our native mosquitoes and has distinctive black and white stripes. The Asian Tiger is out during the day when many people, especially children, are outdoors.

The Asian Tiger breeds *only* in containers from old tires to tree holes, not in wetlands normally associated with mosquitoes. Asian Tigers will breed in any container but they prefer containers outdoors, in the shade and with dark, stained water high in organic content to containers indoors, in the sun or with clear, clean water.

Tigers live around people in urban and suburban locations and are strongly attracted to people. (Some other types of mosquitoes prefer biting animals but will bite humans.) Because Asian Tigers fly no more than about 200 to 300 yards from the containers where they hatched, the most effective method of controlling them is to remove or drain all containers where they can breed.

If you see *insects swarming*, they are *probably not female mosquitoes*. They may be midges, male mosquitoes or other beneficial insects that do not bite. Only female mosquitoes bite.



Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville Maryland 20850

What You Can Do to Reduce the Risks of Becoming Infected with West Nile Virus

The Best Way to Prevent West Nile Virus Infection is to Keep Mosquitoes from Breeding and Biting.

How People Become Infected with West Nile Virus

There are three things that must happen to spread West Nile Virus.

1. There must be an infected bird.
2. A mosquito must bite the bird and become infected.
3. The infected mosquito must then transfer the virus by biting a person.

Health authorities believe that people do not get West Nile Virus directly from a bird, other animals or an infected person. The mosquito is necessary to spread the virus. That is why **prevention of West Nile Virus is best done by eliminating places where mosquitoes can breed.** With few mosquitoes, the transmission cycle is broken or greatly weakened.

What You Can Do to Help:

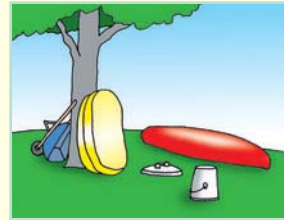
- ✓ Eliminate all standing water on your property. Check at least once a week.
- ✓ Help your neighbors find and eliminate standing water.
- ✓ Become a volunteer mosquito *aNILE*ator to help other County neighborhoods. Call the Montgomery County Volunteer Center, 240-777-2600 for more information.

To Reduce Mosquitoes, Eliminate Places Where They Can Breed.

Mosquitoes breed in standing or stagnant water. As little as a teaspoon or bottle cap of water standing for about a week is enough for hundreds of eggs to develop into adult mosquitoes! **Prevent Standing Water:**



✓ Throw away used tires. If tire swing, drill holes in bottom of tire so water will run out.



✓ Turn over children's wading pools, buckets, wheelbarrows, canoes, and garbage can lids.



✓ Drain water trapped in folds and arrange tarp so water runs off.



✓ Get rid of puddles from window air conditioners.



✓ Fix dripping outdoor water faucets.



✓ Clean out roof gutters and down-spout screens.



✓ Dispose of trash such as bottle caps, open drink cans or bottles, styrofoam cups, foil or plastic food wrappers.



✓ Flush birdbaths and saucers under potted plants at least once a week.

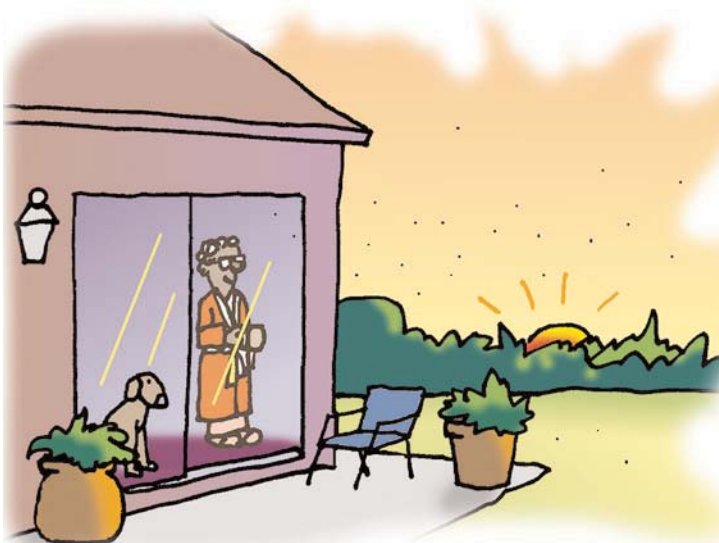
For Water You Cannot Totally Eliminate

✓ Dump or flush out once a week. (If any mosquito eggs or larva were in the water they will not be able to develop to adults.) Remember to check flower pots on balconies of apartment buildings too.



✓ Add fish or aerator or larvicide (mosquito dunks) to ornamental ponds. The fish will eat mosquito eggs and larvae. An aerator will keep water moving. (Water must be stagnant for adult mosquitoes to develop.) Larvicide will prevent mosquito larva from developing. If you use mosquito dunks, check your pond regularly and replace dunks when necessary. Animals such as squirrels, raccoons and dogs like to eat mosquito dunks. This does not hurt the animal.





Protect Yourself and Your Family Against Mosquito Bites:

- ✓ Avoid mosquito infested areas.
- ✓ Limit outdoor activities at peak times of mosquito biting.
- ✓ Use fine-mesh screens on open windows and doors.
- ✓ Repair tears or large holes in these screens.
- ✓ Wear **3-L** clothing:
Light colored
Loose fitting
Long sleeved shirts and long pants.
- ✓ Use insect repellants when outdoors (follow directions on the container).
Spray clothes outdoors *before* putting them on.



What to Do With Dead Birds

Birds will **not** be picked up for testing in Maryland. The value of testing birds in the past was to learn where West Nile Virus was in the County and to track its spread. In the summer of 2002, more than half the birds tested were infected with West Nile Virus. This means West Nile Virus is endemic, established throughout the County. There is little new information to learn from further testing.

How to dispose of a dead bird.

- You can leave it where it is. It will quickly decompose and/or a scavenger will take it away.
- If it is unsightly you can pick it up with a shovel and put it under or behind some bushes where it will decompose and/or a scavenger will take it away.
- You can put it in a plastic bag and throw it in the trash. For the protection of workers who pick up trash, do not throw an unbagged bird in the trash. The bird will get maggots and some of them may fall on workers.

You cannot catch West Nile Virus from a dead bird.

However, whenever you handle a dead bird or other dead animal you should wear gloves and wash your hands afterward.

For recorded information about West Nile Virus and other health topics, call 1-866-866-2769.

Who to Contact for More Information:

BY INTERNET: (Click on the http:)

Montgomery County WNV Website:

<http://mosquito.askdep.com>

Email: help@askdep.com

State of Maryland WNV Websites

http://www.edcp.org/html/west_nile.html

<http://www.mda.state.md.us>

Choose Plant Industries and

Pest Management, then Mosquito control.

To receive health alerts via email from Montgomery County Public Health Services, Register at:

<http://montgomerycountymd.gov>

Under Online Services,

choose eSubscription Newsletters.

Follow prompts.

BY PHONE:

Communicable Disease Control Program

Dept. of Health & Human Services

(240) 777-1755

Stagnant Water on Private Property

Housing Code Enforcement in Dept. of Housing & Community Affairs

(240) 777-3600

(Press 2 to file a complaint)

Storm Drain Blockage

Dept. of Public Works & Transp.

(240) 777-7623

Stormwater Ponds/Standing Water

Dept. of Environmental Protection

(240) 777-7700

Used Tire Disposal

County Transfer Station

(240) 777-6410